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**Education Law
Advocacy Project**



ELAP's September Outreach

Minnesota State Fair

Being at Great Minnesota Get-Together's Education Building for all 10 days gave us a (maroon and) golden opportunity to share about the need for our work in education law advocacy. Special thanks to everyone who stopped by to visit us at the FAIR...including **Governor Walz!**

School Resources Fairs

Sept. 1 - Keystone Community Services' School Supply Distribution in St. Paul
Sept. 17 - Dakota Child & Family Clinic Fundraising Event in Burnsville
Sept. 17 - Uniting Cultures & Convivencia Hispana Multicultural Fiesta in St. James
Sept. 18 - HACER Vaxx Clinic in Shakopee

Message from ELAP's Lead Attorney

I am very excited about the start of the 2022 school year as well as the opportunities to advocate on behalf of students' educational rights!

The aim of ELAP has always been to keep kids in school and improve their academic performance by enforcing the education rights of the students and families. The public education system is complex, and often children need an informed advocate to help them achieve their full potential. I have been lucky to be the advocate for many students over the years.

Minnesota continues to struggle with a persistent “achievement gap” - defined as a disparity in academic performance between minority and disadvantaged students and their Caucasian peers. The pandemic and its consequences have impacted students' mental health, attendance, and academic success. The gap has widened.

This summer, I, along with Cierra Johnson, ELAP's summer law clerk, wrote the *Children's Rights in Education Handbook*, for professionals working with Minnesota students. This handbook is a guide to navigating public education issues facing students and families. In it we underscored the importance of **early intervention**, as well as the state law to have every child **read by 3rd grade**. We also outlined the **Personal Learning Plan** that schools should have every student develop starting in 9th grade. Closing the achievement gap requires expecting and supporting **all** students to reach their full potential.

This handbook is free, is available to all, and is linked in the SMRLS website at: <https://www.smrls.org/get-help/legal-services/education/> It is also available directly here: www.smrls.org/files/7516/6266/3549/Childrens_Education_Rights_Handbook.pdf

I am so excited to share the handbook with you and I hope you find this resource beneficial.

Best wishes for the new school year!

Lilian Ejebe



Client Story

ELAP received an Educational Compensatory Award for their client! The MN Dept. of Education found that the school district will pay \$4,655 to help the student recoup lost skills in core classes, and to meet their Individualized Education Program (IEP) goals this school year. The district will also reimburse the parent for the costs of the diagnostic assessment, and for transporting the student to and from services.

Parent Quote:

"Oh, my Lordy... Laura, where did you come from?! You are so kind and helpful. I truly feel in my heart that you want what is best for our family."

October is Dyslexia Awareness Month

Did you know?

MN schools are required to screen students at the end of K, 1st, and 2nd grade for dyslexia if the student is not reading at grade level.

What is dyslexia?

Minnesota Statute defines dyslexia as:

"A learning disability that is neurological in origin. It is characterized by difficulties with accurate or fluent recognition of words, poor spelling, and decoding abilities."

What to do if you suspect a student may be struggling with dyslexia

Federal law for children with disabilities includes a program called **"Child Find"**, which requires schools to identify, locate, and evaluate all children with disabilities. [20 USC 1412(a)(3)]. This is in place regardless of the severity of their disabilities, or if the child is passing their classes.

Additionally, in Minnesota, schools should screen for dyslexia. If it is determined that the student has dyslexia, parents can request a comprehensive evaluation - the first step to starting the IEP process.

Resources

ELAP Advocacy Trainings

ELAP regularly collaborates with community organizations to train groups on educational rights and advocacy, on topics such as Individual Education Plans (IEPs), bullying and discrimination, English Learner rights, and more!

Upcoming Training Audiences:

Foster & Adoptive Family Support Group, Mental Health Service Providers,
County Social Workers **Contact ELAP for more information*

ELAP Education Law Factsheets

ELAP's free legal factsheets on topics such as bullying & harassment, transgender student rights, IPEs, Reading by 3rd grade, EL Learner Rights and more! Free to download via our website, <https://www.smrls.org>

ELAP Spanish-Language Collaboration With MN de Hoy

ELAP is partnering with MLatino Media's **MN de Hoy** digital newspaper to spread the word about education rights and advocacy tips for parents.

Here is Part 2 in the series:

MN de Hoy Interview: <https://youtu.be/QozfzVPD6zE>

MN de Hoy Article:

<https://www.elminnesotadehoy.com/elap-sugerencias-de-abogar-por-sus-hijos-en-las-escuelas/>

Other Resources

Dyslexia

Assistive Technology for Students with Dyslexia

PACER Workshop - Nov. 16 <https://www.pacer.org/workshops/>

Pre-Recorded Webcasts, Interviews, & Presentations by Professionals

www.readingrockets.org/teaching/experts

Mental Health Awareness Week - October 3-10

Free Mental Health Trainings by NAMI MN includes youth topics:

<https://namimn.org/mental-illness-awareness-week-is-october-3rd-8th-2022/>